

# Army spouses eligible for educational assistance

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The Army Emergency Relief Spouse Education Assistance Program provides financial assistance to eligible spouses of Active Duty soldiers to enable them to pursue their educational goals while residing with their spouses here in Korea. In spite of intense marketing efforts, only about 100 Army spouses have taken advantage of the program to date. All spouses to include non-command sponsored spouses are eligible for AERSEAP.

Eligibility for financial aid is 'needs based' and helps defray the costs of undergraduate level college courses both academic and vocational/technical, Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support courses and tests for college credit, high school completion courses, General Educational Development testing and English as a Second Language studies. Financial assistance is not available for graduate level courses or to enable a spouse to get a second undergraduate degree.

The program covers up to 50 percent of tuition plus text books and fees, up to a maximum of \$350 per academic Term with an annual "Cap" of \$1750. Here in Korea the Academic Year consists of five Terms of eight weeks duration.

deduct the \$4,000 Standard Deduction, then deduct \$1,000 for each college student and \$500 for the other child). The soldier's spouse is entitled to \$300 per Term, or 50 percent of tuition costs whichever is less.

If the spouse was working and earned \$21,000 per annum, 33 percent or roughly \$7,000 would be added to

a new or enhanced job skill. Interested soldiers and their spouses should visit their local Army Education Center or Army Community Service building to pick up an application form and obtain more information. Application forms and more information are also available from the AER Website: [www.aerhq.org](http://www.aerhq.org).

The program started in Term 1 (August 2000) with the University of Maryland University College and Central Texas College offering college courses at the six Army Education Centers and eight Army Learning Centers located from Pusan to the Demilitarized Zone as well as at Osan and Kunsan Air Bases

Criteria for AERSEAP eligibility:

- \*Be a dependent spouse of an active duty soldier assigned to Eighth United States Army or other Active Army unit assigned to Korea.

- \*Reside with the active duty soldier.

- \*Be a US citizen or a permanent resident of the USA (Green Card holder).

- \*File an application for the program each Term

- \*Once enrolled, maintain a 2.0 grade point average to continue.

Application Information: A spouse AERSEAP application packet must include:

- \*AER Form 5, AER Spouse Education Assistance Program Application, is available at all Army Education Centers/Army Learning Centers and from your local Army Community Services facility. It is also available Online at [www.aerhq.org](http://www.aerhq.org)

- \*Permanent Change of Station orders (orders assigning soldier to Korea, not Travel Orders).

- \*Transcripts or grade slips if

available.

- \*Photo copy of spouse's identification card.

- \*Current Leave and Earning Statement dated no more than two months prior to application deadline date, e.g. deadline July, LES for May or June.

- \*Privacy Act Statement signed by the soldier and spouse.

The deadline dates for application submission for the remainder of Academic Year, 2001-2002:

Feb 25 for Term 4; and May 6 for Term 5. Classes start about one month later (e.g., Term 4 classes start April 1 and Term 5 classes start June 3).

How much financial assistance can a spouse expect to receive? Remember, this is a 'needs based' program and if the soldier has an annual Adjusted Gross Income of \$28,700 or less the spouse receives \$350 or 50 percent of tuition cost, whichever is lower. The maximum benefit for a five-term Academic Year here in Korea is \$1750 per annum.

How does AER calculate AGI? A soldier whose income including separate rations is \$44,000, has a non-working spouse and three children (two of whom are in college and one in high school) would have an AGI of \$37,500 (first,

See "MIL" on page 17.

the soldier's salary for a total AGI of \$42,500. The spouse would still be entitled to \$300 per Term. However, if the soldier's AGI fell between \$45,401 and \$61,800, the spouse would only be entitled to \$250 per Term or half the tuition costs, whichever is less.

Finally, if the soldier's AGI is

\$61,801 or higher the spouse is not eligible for any financial assistance. Remember, AERSEAP is a 'needs based' program. Please note that the above calculations are subject to change.

Eligible spouses are encouraged to take advantage of this great opportunity to improve their education level or learn